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LETTER DATED 23 MAY 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, CROATIA AND TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a joint statement issued after the meeting held at Zenica on 18 May 1995 of the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Turkey.

We should be grateful if you would have this statement circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Muhamed SACIRBEY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the
Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

(Signed) Mario NOBILO
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the
Republic of Croatia

(Signed) İnal BATU
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Turkey

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Annex

Joint statement issued after the Fifth Trilateral Ministerial Meeting of Turkey, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, held at Zenica on 18 May 1995

At the invitation of H.E. Irfan Ljubijankic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, H.E. Erdal İnönü, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, and H.E. Dr. Mate Granic, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Croatia, visited Zenica on 18 May 1995, and held the fifth round of trilateral ministerial talks. The Ministers reviewed the latest developments related to the political and military situation in the region and evaluated the further contribution of their countries in the efforts to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the crisis.

The Ministers strongly condemned the latest shelling of the safe area and the exclusion zone of Sarajevo, the open artillery and infantry attacks against the urban core, as well as the continuation of terror and ethnic cleansing of the Bosniacs and Croats in Banja Luka and other parts of the occupied territories.

The attacks against the safe area of Sarajevo and Bihac and the oppression in Banja Luka were flagrant violations of United Nations resolutions and had to be stopped and sanctioned on the basis of the valid decisions of the international community.

The three Ministers reviewed the situation in the region, noting with great dissatisfaction an evident stalemate in the peace process and the lack of a comprehensive, unambiguous and incentive-oriented attitude on the part of the international community aimed at a lasting and just solution to the crisis. They considered that the indecisive policy of the international community was, in effect, enabling the Bosnian Serbs to continue to reject the peace plan of the Five Nations Contact Group, whereby lack of progress in the activities of the Contact Group aimed at ensuring the conditions for the resumption of political negotiations might lead to the renewal of intensive military activities and further aggravate social and human conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was the conviction of the Ministers that the re-emergence of such a negative trend would make it imperative that the unjust arms embargo, imposed upon the legal Government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the international community, be lifted, thus enabling the right of self-defence.

The Ministers renewed their firm conviction that the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was also open to the Bosnian Serbs, represented the most valuable asset for a lasting solution and preservation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a multicultural and multiethnic State of the three constituent nations and as a pluralistic democratic society. To that end, they called upon the international community to continue the isolation of the militant extremist and separatist elements of the Bosnian Serbs. They also firmly reiterated the need to continue to uphold the Security Council sanctions regime against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) so as to urge the Belgrade authorities to give unambiguous and unequivocal support to the peaceful

settlement of the crisis in the region by disassociating itself fully from the extremist and militant factions of the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs and accepting the necessity of mutual recognition within the internationally recognized borders of all the States in the region. The Ministers further underlined the importance of the mutual recognition of all States of the former Yugoslavia as a necessary prerequisite for a solution to all the exiting, disputable issues in the region.

They noted with great satisfaction that the process of political understanding and cooperation between the Bosnian Croat and Bosniac communities was advancing and that new positive steps were being taken to enhance the constitutional, legislative, administrative and security structure of the Federation. They urged the leaders of both communities to continue vigorously the Federation-building process at all levels. They particularly stressed the importance of the adoption of a common platform and joint action by the Bosniacs and Bosnian Croats within the institutions of the Federation.

The Ministers expressed their satisfaction and encouragement of the growing support and assistance to the Federation-building process by the international community through the activities of high officials and coordinators in line with the Munich and Bonn Agreements, in particular within the "Friends of the Federation" group. In that context, they confirmed the resolve of Turkey, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue to support and assist the Bosniacs and Bosnian Croats in their endeavour to make the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina a success.

The Ministers also reviewed and endorsed the observations and recommendations submitted by the trilateral ambassadorial good offices group that visited the territory of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina under the mandate of the previous trilateral ministerial meeting, held at Zagreb on 7 December 1994, in order to inquire into the situation in specific communities and to recommend solutions so as to foster the implementation of the Washington Agreements and to enhance confidence between the Bosnian Croats and Bosniacs. The conclusions were as follows:

(a) The trilateral cooperation of Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia at various levels and in various forms contributed to furthering the normalization of life and confidence-building among the communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the three countries should continue the multifaceted cooperation to the benefit of the peace process and stability in the region;

(b) The three Ministers also called upon the Friends of the Federation to instruct their ambassadors in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other diplomatic officers and representatives to continue to cooperate on a multilateral basis in assisting the better functioning of the institutions of the Federation;

(c) They welcomed the momentum created by the results of the constituent assembly session held at Novi Travnik and by the Mostar Agreement of 18 May and supported the latest initiatives of the Governments of the United States of America and Germany to accelerate the solution to the remaining differences regarding the constitutional, legislative, administrative and other issues;

(d) The present situation on the ground and the danger of escalation of fighting urged the adoption of a comprehensive and joint Bosnian Croat and Bosniac strategy and a negotiation platform for involving also the Bosnian Serbs within their arrangements;

(e) The progress achieved in the establishment of a joint military command of the Federation and the immediate impact of those decisions on the situation on the ground further stressed the importance of creating an efficient command structure in accordance with the constitution of the Federation;

(f) The Federation-building process necessitated also the elaboration of a comprehensive political and national programme of both the Bosniacs and the Bosnian Croats as the constitution of the Federation was to have a deep impact on the social, cultural, religious and other aspects of lives of both nations;

(g) The implementation of the Washington Agreements might also be further encouraged and assisted by the establishment of a multilateral constitutional expert group as anticipated by the Munich Agreement and the Ministers called upon the joint diplomatic efforts in that regard;

(h) The enhancement of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was deeply related to the economic and social development and the Ministers committed themselves jointly to induce the public and private sectors of their respective countries to participate actively in the rehabilitation and development of the economy, in particular, the industrial base and the transport and communications system;

(i) The Ministers reaffirmed the right of the refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes. They further underlined the need for providing incentives and making life easier for returnees. They noted that the issues of refugees and displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina within the Federation-building process was of critical importance and agreed that more assertive policy was needed in that regard, in particular related to the temporary shelter for the displaced persons in the territory of the Federation from other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They further agreed to appeal jointly to the Friends of the Federation group and other international associations to elaborate and facilitate the realization of various projects for a solution to the issues of shelter, work, health care, education and other relevant issues;

(j) Alarmed by the decision of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to reduce humanitarian aid to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministers decided to appeal to the international community, the United Nations, UNHCR and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) to continue to provide Bosnia and Herzegovina with the much-needed humanitarian aid.

The Ministers confirmed the determination of their Governments to bolster the trilateral cooperation in all fields and to undertake concrete steps to participate actively in the efforts of the international community to bring about a comprehensive settlement for the crisis in the region and the establishment of stability and a new security order.

The Ministers expressed their appreciation for the valuable role that the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) played in Bosnia and Herzegovina, provided that it carried out the function for which it had been designated. They reiterated their appreciation of Turkey's positive contribution to the peace process in the region, in particular through the deployment of Turkish troops under UNPROFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina and also through the political and diplomatic activity of Turkey within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), OIC and other international institutions.

The Ministers also expressed their conviction that continued activity of the good offices group constituted an asset of the trilateral cooperation.

The Ministers reiterated their intention to continue with their consultations on a periodical basis and to hold their next meeting at Ankara.